

If you are navigating using only the keyboard or using an assistive device and need help, visit our [Navigation Instructional page](#) for alternative views and navigation. Warning: If you select this link, you will leave this site and go to a new browser window. You will automatically return to this page when you close the new browser window.

# BUSINESS SERVICES ONLINE

## Integrated Registration Services IRES

---

### User Registration Handbook for 2009

Social Security Administration  
Office of Systems Electronic Services  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

June 2009

---

### CONTACT INFORMATION

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

#### ***Employer Reporting Assistance***

For help with registering or annual wage reporting, call:

**1-800-772-6270** (toll free)

or 1-410-965-4241

Monday - Friday

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern time

Email: [ssa.comments@ssa.gov](mailto:ssa.comments@ssa.gov)

#### ***BSO Technical Assistance***

For technical help with using BSO, call:

**1-888-772-2970** (toll free)

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Fax: 1-410-597-0237

E-mail: [bsa.support@ssa.gov](mailto:bsa.support@ssa.gov)

*Caution: Do not use your browser's Back, Forward, or Refresh buttons while you are logged in to BSO. This could log you out unintentionally.*

Also, see the link at <http://www.ssa.gov/privacy.html>.

### ***General Information***

For information about Social Security programs and benefits, call:

**1-800-772-1213** (toll free)

Monday - Friday

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern time

For TDD/TTY, call 1-800-325-0778 (toll free)

## **WHAT IS BSO?**

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

Welcome to **Business Services Online (BSO)**.

BSO offers Internet services for businesses, individuals, employers, attorneys, non-attorneys, and others who exchange information with Social Security. This handbook focuses on the IRES registration process for all users of the BSO and its services.

**To begin using BSO, you must first complete a one-time registration process as described in the [Registering](#) section of this document.**

As a registered BSO user, you will be able to:

For BSO services go to: <http://www.ssa.gov/>

## **REMINDER**

- User Identification Number (User ID) will no longer be deactivated after 365 days of non-use. Passwords will expire after 90 days; you will be prompted to change your password when you login after it has expired in order to access BSO services.

## **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

To use BSO for 2009, you will need:

- Internet access,
- A Web browser with 128-bit encryption and cookies enabled, and
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 5.0 or higher recommended) if you plan to create Forms W-2 or Forms W-2c online. You will need this software to view and print your forms. For a free copy of Acrobat Reader go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

---

## SECURITY



BSO uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) communications protocol and 128-bit line encryption to protect your privacy. These technologies prevent eavesdropping and ensure that data is transmitted securely over the Internet.

*If your browser supports 128-bit encryption, you should see the phrase '128-bit encryption' or '128-bit cipher strength' when you select Help/About from your browser menu.*

**CAUTION:** *Internet e-mail to or from Social Security does not provide security features. Social Security recommends that you not include private information, such as your Social Security Number, in Internet e-mail messages.*

**NOTE:** *To work with BSO, your browser must be set to accept cookies. This is the default setting for most browsers. If you receive a request to store a file on your computer, select Yes. BSO cookies will be deleted when you close your browser.*

---

## BSO/IRES AVAILABILITY

BSO/IRES normally operates during the following hours, including holidays, and may be available at other times as well:

*Monday - Friday ..... 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. Eastern Time*  
*Saturday ..... 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time*  
*Sunday ..... 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Eastern Time*

---

### General

Passwords will expire after 90 days; you will be prompted to change your password when you login after it has expired in order to access BSO services.

NOTE: BSO offers other services **not** related to employers and the wage reporting / SSN verification processes. For information on these services, please visit the BSO website.

---

## REGISTERING

You must register in order to use BSO. You do not need to re-register every year; however you will be prompted to change your password if you login after 90 days.

Every BSO user must register personally. YOU MAY NOT REGISTER ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER PERSON.

To register, choose Registration. Go to : [www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm)

### Information You Will Need to Register

The information you provide when you register allows us to contact you, if necessary, and to confirm your identity before issuing a User ID.

You will be asked for your:

- Name as it appears on your Social Security card,
- Social Security Number,
- Date of birth,
- Home mailing address,
- Telephone number,
- Fax number (optional),
- E-mail address, and
- 5 Knowledge Based Questions to be answered.

You will also be asked to create and enter a personal password of your choosing.

**NOTE:** *Your full name, Social Security Number, and date of birth will be verified against Social Security records for user registration.*

---

**TIP:** *By providing an e-mail address when you register, Social Security will be able to send you W-2 News, which is an electronic newsletter that provides important wage and tax reporting updates.*

---

If you do not have a Social Security Number because you do not work in the United States, **leave the "Social Security Number" field blank.** This will let you continue registering without providing this information. If you register without providing a Social Security Number, additional authentication will be required before you can use the BSO services.

### User ID Registration

<p><b>CAUTION:</b> <i>Do not use your browser's Back, Forward, and Refresh buttons while you are completing the registration form. This could unintentionally clear the form.</i></p>
---

When you are ready with the above information, follow these steps to register online:

- Go to:  
[www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm)  
This link will open the BSO Welcome Page.
- Select the *Register Button* under the [Welcome to Business Services Online](#) section. This will open an important user certification statement.

**NOTE:** *If your browser does not support 128-bit encryption, an authorization error message will be displayed when you select the Registration link.*

- Select the *I Accept* button to indicate that you have read and understand the user certification statement and agree to its contents. This will open the registration form.
- Provide the requested information on the registration form. All fields are mandatory unless they are labeled as optional. Optional fields may be left blank if they do not apply. For assistance with completing the registration form, select the *Help* link for tips on completing the registration form.
- When you have completed the registration form, select the *Register* button. BSO will verify your identity against Social Security records and display your User ID. **Make a note of your User ID because you will need it to log in to BSO.**

## **Your BSO Password**

At the time of registration, you must enter your own personal password. Your password must contain any combination of eight letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Special characters are not allowed and passwords are not case sensitive. Secure your password and do not share it with anyone.

You do not need to re-register every year; however you will be prompted to change your password if you login after 90 days.

Your User ID and Password are both required to log in to BSO.

---

**IMPORTANT:** *Your password is for your use only and may not be disclosed to anyone else, including other employees. Exercise caution with disclosing your User ID. Your User ID is the equivalent of your electronic signature and is assigned to you personally - not generically to your company. You are responsible for all actions taken while using your User ID.*

---

Immediately after registering, you will be able to update your user registration

password and add/update your employer information.

### **Complete Phone Registration**

If you began the user registration process by calling the Employer Customer Service Personnel, or have been directed to call the Employer Reporting Assistance number during your online registration, you may complete your BSO user registration by selecting your own unique password online.

Select the *Complete Phone Registration* Complete button on the BSO Welcome page under Welcome to Business Services Online Section, you will first need to select the *I Accept* button to indicate that you have read and understand the user certification statement and agree to its contents. This will open the registration form and you will need to enter the following information:

- User ID (provided by the Customer Service Personnel)
  - First and Last Name
  - Social Security Number
  - Date of Birth, and
  - Password (For more information see the "Your BSO Password" section above.)
- 

## **LOGGING IN**

To log in to BSO:

- Go to:  
[www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm)  
This link will open the BSO Welcome Page.
- Select the *Login* button under the Welcome to Business Services Online section. This will open an important user certification statement on the login screen.
- Enter your User ID and password.
  - If you have received a temporary password in the mail, type your User ID and temporary password. At the prompt, enter the temporary password and then enter your own unique password twice. Use your own User ID even if you are using BSO on behalf of another company.
  - If you have registered for BSO services with the Customer Service Personnel but have not yet selected your password, select the [Complete Phone Registration](#) link from the Login Page. This will open a new Registration form. (For more information see Complete Phone Registration above).
- Check the *I Accept* check box to indicate that you have read and understood the user certification statement and agree to its contents.

- Select the *Login* button at the bottom of this screen. This will open your BSO Main Menu page. The BSO Main Menu page is your point of entry for all BSO services.

## If You Forgot Your Password

If you forgot your password, you can request a new one. There are two methods to request a new password - by mail, or by answering three random questions out of five knowledge-based questions you previously answered during registration or at login. If you request a new password by mail, a temporary password will be sent to you in the mail. You will not be able to use BSO until you receive your temporary password.

Option 1: To request a new password by mail:

- You must provide your User ID to access the *Forgot Your Password* link.
- Select the *Forgot Your Password* link to the right of the Password field on the Login page. This will open the *Forgot Password* page.
- Select the *Request Password by Mail* button at the bottom of the screen. This will open the *Request Password by Mail* page.
- Enter your first name, last name, Social Security Number, and date of birth.
- Select the *Request Temporary Password* button. This will display a message indicating that your password has been reissued successfully. Social Security will send you a temporary password in the mail, usually within two weeks.

After you request a new password, your old password will no longer work. When you receive your temporary password, you may log in to BSO and will be prompted to change your password. Your password must contain any combination of eight letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Special characters are not allowed and passwords are not case sensitive.

Option 2: To replace a forgotten password by answering knowledge-based questions:

- You must provide your User ID to access the *Forgot Your Password* link,
- Select the *Forgot your password* link to the right of the Password field on the Login page. This will open the *Forgot Password* page.
- Answer the three randomly chosen questions that you had previously answered. Answers are not case sensitive but should match your previous answers.
- Enter your new password and re-enter to confirm it. Your password must contain any combination of eight letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Special characters are not allowed and passwords are not case sensitive.

Select the *Submit New Password* button. This will display a message indicating that your password has been successfully changed. You may now select the Login button and log in to BSO with your User ID and your newly changed password.

[Assistance](#) number at 1-800-772-6270.

---

## ADD YOUR EMPLOYER INFORMATION

After receiving your User ID the next step is to Request Access to BSO Services. Certain service suites require associated employer information. If a service suite is selected from Request Access to BSO Services and employer information is required, you will be directed to the Add Your Employer Information page.

### Information You Will Need to Add Your Employer Information

Even if you plan to use BSO on behalf of another company, you should provide information about your own company when you enter company information.

You will be asked for the following information:

- Your type of association with the employer.
- Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Business or Organization Name, and
- Third-party submitter indication.

**Self-Employed and No EIN?** *If you are self-employed and have an employee(s) working for you, for whom you report wages, you must obtain an EIN from the Internal Revenue Service before registering. For instructions on applying for an EIN, go to the IRS web page: Employer Identification Number (EIN) - How to apply, <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=97860,00.html>. However, if you are self-employed and do **not** have any employees for whom you report wages, you may register without an EIN by selecting the "I am Self-Employed" and my earnings are reported on IRS Schedule SE (Self-Employment Earnings)" listed on the Add Your Employer Information screen.*

When you are ready with the above information, follow these steps to Add Your Employer Information and start your Request to Access BSO Services:

- Select the *Add Your Employer Information* link from the message provided to you in Request New Services link from the Main Menu page. This will open an important user certification statement.
- Select the I Accept button to indicate that you have read and understand the user certification statement and agree to its contents. This will open the employer information form.
- Provide the requested information on the employer information form. All fields are mandatory unless they are labeled as optional. Optional fields may be left blank if they do not apply. For assistance with completing the employer

- information form, select the *Help* link for tips on completing the form.
- When you have completed the employer information form, select the *Submit Employer Information* button. BSO will verify your association with this EIN against Social Security records.
  - Once you receive the screen indicating your employer information was added successfully, select the *Request New Services* button to continue the process to request BSO services.
- 

## ACCESSING BSO SERVICES

### Request Access to BSO Services

Once you have registered to use BSO, you will need to request access to BSO services:

- **For newly registered users**, from the Successful User Registration page, check the *I Accept* check box to indicate you have read and understood the user certification statement and agree to its contents. Then select the *Request New Services* link. A page will open with a description of the available suites of services.
- **For existing users**, select the *Request New Services* link, under Manage Services from the Main Menu page. A page will open with a description of the available suites of services.
- Choose the suites of services that best suit the type of business you plan to conduct with Social Security. A *Request New Services* wizard will guide you through your selection of services. Certain service suites require additional employer related information. If a service suite is selected and employer related information is required and has not been previously entered, you will be presented with a message that contains a link to enter the additional information on the Add Your Employer Information page. Once the additional information is submitted, from the Add Your Employer Information Successful page, select the *Request New Services* link to return to the wizard process.
- At the end of the wizard, you will receive confirmation that Social Security has received your request for services. When applicable, activation codes(s) will be sent to you or your employer, and will usually be received within two weeks. Activation codes will enable you to access the services you have chosen. If you request more than one service, you will receive a separate activation code for each service.

**NOTE:** Reporting wages (uploading a file or filling in W-2 screens) does not require an

*activation code, unless you are a foreign or volunteer user. Once you have completed your registration, you may begin reporting wages immediately.*

Users who are already registered and use BSO services may add or change services by selecting the *Request New Services* link from the Manage Services menu on the Main Menu page.

### Activation Code

Once you have requested the BSO services you need, Social Security will send an activation code(s) to you or your employer, depending on the service(s) you have requested.

Some applications within the BSO suites of services require a higher level of security. Therefore, your employer must approve the usage of some of these applications.

The following table indicates the type of user, the type of access, and where the activation code will be sent:

If you are a:	And you selected access to:	Then your activation code will be mailed to:
Regular user (not self-employed or foreign registrant)	Report Wages to Social Security	<b>No activation code is required. You may begin to use the service immediately after you request it and create a password.</b>
Regular user (not self-employed or foreign registrant)	View File/Wage Report Status, Errors, and Error Notices	The address you provided during registration.
Regular user (not self-employed or foreign registrant)	View Name and Social Security Number Errors	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Regular user (not self-employed or foreign registrant)	Verify Social Security Numbers online	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Self-employed registrant w/ no EIN	Report Wages to Social Security	<b>No activation code is required. You may begin to use the service immediately after you request it and create a password.</b>
Self-employed registrant w/ no EIN	View File/Wage Report Status, Errors, and Error Notices	The address you provided during registration. NOTE: SSNVS is not available if you registered without an EIN.
Self-employed registrant w/ EIN	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file except Report Wages to Social Security (no activation code required).
Household registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file except Report Wages to Social Security (no activation code required).

		required).
Foreign registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Volunteer registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Attorney registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Non-Attorney registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file for your employer.
Other registrant	Any BSO service	The address SSA has on file for your employer.

### Activate Access to BSO Services

Certain BSO services require an activation code to be entered prior to first use. Log in to BSO and select the *Enter Activation Code (s)* link from the Main Menu page. On the *Enter Activation Code (s)* page, you will enter each activation code. After you have activated the requested services, you may begin using your BSO services immediately. You will not have access to those services until they have been activated.

**NOTE:** *You may receive multiple activation codes, but not all services require activation codes. You do not need an activation code for wage reporting unless you are a foreign user.*

### Remove Access to BSO Services

If you no longer require a service in BSO, you may deactivate some or all of your access via the *View / Edit Services* link from the Main Menu page under Manage Services. On the View / Edit services page, you may remove access by checking the box next to the service and selecting the *Remove* button. You may remove only service(s) to which you have access. If you remove access to any service(s) in error, you must re-request access from the Request New Services link.

### Re-Request Activation Codes

If you have requested access to any BSO service and have not received your activation code(s) from Social Security, select the *View Pending Services* link from the Main Menu page under Manage Services. You may re-request activation code(s) if it has been at least 10 days since you requested access to BSO services. The activation code will expire after 60 days if it has not been activated. If it has been 60 days or more since you requested access, you must start over and request access to BSO services on the Request New Services link on the Main Menu page under Manage Services.

**NOTE:** *Some activation codes are sent directly to your employer. Check with your employer to verify if the activation code(s) have been received.*

## MAINTAINING YOUR REGISTRATION AND EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Use the Main Menu page links under Manage Account to:

- Update your registration information
- Change your password,
- Deactivate your User ID,
- Add/Update employer information, and
- Remove your employer information.

### Update Your Registration Information

Select the *View / Edit Account Info* link on the Main Menu page under Manage Account to change the contact information you provided when you registered. If you require help with updating your contact information, call the [Employer Reporting Assistance](#) number at 1-800-772-6270.



*The Social Security Number (SSN) entered during initial User Registration cannot be updated on the View / Edit Account Info screen. In order to update your SSN you must deactivate your current User ID and re-register to enter new SSN information on the User registration screen.*

### Change Your Password

Select the *Change Password* link on the Main Menu page under Manage Account to change your password at any time. Your password must contain any combination of eight letters and numbers (e.g. 9580859A or frog2828). Special characters are not allowed and passwords are not case sensitive.

### Deactivate Your User ID

Select the *Disable Account* link on the Main Menu page under Manage Account to deactivate your User ID in the event it is disclosed to an unauthorized party. Prompt User ID deactivation helps to ensure the security of the information you provide to Social Security.

If you require help with deactivating your User ID, call the [Employer Reporting Assistance](#) number at 1-800-772-6270.

Deactivating your own User ID does not prevent you from obtaining a new User ID.

### Add/Update Your Employer Information

Select the *Add/Update Your Employer Information* link on the Main Menu page to add or

update the following employer information you provided during the Add Your Employer Information process:

- Business or Organization Name, and
- Third-party submitter indication.



*The Employer Identification Number (EIN) and your employer association type entered in the Add Your Employer Information screen cannot be updated. You must first Remove Your Employer Information which will deactivate your current services associated with this employer. After you have removed your employer information, you can return to the Account Maintenance menu and Add Your Employer Information for your new employer. You must then Request Access to BSO Services for your newly added employer.*

### **Remove Your Employer Information**

Select the *Remove Your Employer Information* link on the Main Menu page to remove your associated employer information and deactivate all services requested under that employer. To request services under a new employer, select the *Request New Services* link from the Remove Your Employer Information Successful page or use the *Request New Services* link from the Main Menu page.

---

## **LOGGING OUT**

Select the *Logout* link at the top or bottom of BSO pages when you are finished using BSO. This will open a page to confirm that you want to end your BSO session. Select *Yes* to exit BSO.

---

## **GETTING HELP**

Use the *BSO Help* link throughout BSO to view this handbook or other applicable online resources. Selecting the *BSO Help* link will open a new browser window in addition to the one you are already using. You may need to manipulate your display to see both browser windows.

To speak with a Social Security representative, see the telephone support numbers at the front of this handbook. For help by e-mail, select *Contact SSA* at the top or

bottom of BSO pages or address your e-mail message to [bso.support@ssa.gov](mailto:bso.support@ssa.gov).

**CAUTION:** *Social Security recommends that you not include private information, such as your Social Security Number, in Internet e-mail messages. E-mail spam filters should be set to accept e-mails from the @ssa.gov domain. Otherwise, important notices and responses to inquiries may be unintentionally blocked.*

Please be as specific as possible about your question or problem, including details about the Web page you were using, any error messages received, and all other relevant information. Include your phone number so that Social Security can contact you if necessary.

---

## **ALSO ON THE INTERNET**

Visit the Employer Reporting Instructions & Information Page at [www.socialsecurity.gov/employer](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer) for a wealth of information of interest to filers. Select the [Business Services Online Tutorial](#) link on this page for an online tour of BSO. You need Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 5.0 or higher is recommended) to view the BSO tutorial. For a free copy of Acrobat Reader, go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).